

"What a fool I am to go on livin' this way," said he to himself. "Because Mary wasn't true, that ain't to say that every girl is false. Now there's Alice; I'll bet she'd be as true as steel to the fellow she loved, and I don't know that she's in love with anybody yet, exceptin' it's Bob Stewart, and I guess she can't be dead in love with him, or she wouldn't 'a let me see her home from Anderson's parin' bee the other night; and Bob himself there. The farm is all paid for, and I don't owe a man a cent. And I have enough money in the bank to make a start on. Of course the house ain't up to much, though if a fellow's got to live alone all his life, then it's plenty good enough. But supposin' Alice would be willing to share up with me, then it ain't good enough; and it wouldn't be long before I'd have a better." And so musing and talking to himself, as—for lack of other company—he was wont to do, he went into the house.

About two hours later, John, dressed in his best suit of clothes, was on his way to the house on the hill. It was a beautiful night—for there are beautiful nights even in gloomy November; just as there are moments bright and beautiful in the saddest and darkest lives—the full moon was rising above the tree tops before him, and the bright stars were shining overhead. He had frequently been at Gray's before, but never on such an important mission as the one he was on to-night. He had gone there to talk over crops, and implements, and stock, and several times recently, under the pretence of borrowing, or returning something which he had borrowed—he went for no other purpose than that of having a look at, and a word with Alice.

As John drew near to the house he saw a light shining in the "room" window, and at once concluded that the Grays' had company; as the "room" was seldom lighted up, but on such occasions. John in his visits to the Gray house, always—in true country fashion—went to the back door. This he intended doing to-night, but in passing, he was suddenly seized with a desire to know the cause of the illumination of the "room." For he felt that he might want to say "something" to Alice to-night, and it

was very important that the coast should be clear. The blind on the window did not reach the bottom by an inch or two; so John stepped cautiously forward, and stooping down, peeped in.

The sight that met his gaze riveted him for the moment to the spot. There stood Alice, and beside her stood his rival, Bob Stewart. She with head bowed, and hands clasped. He with outstretched arms, and an eager, wistful look in his honest, manly face. John Drummond could only look upon such a scene for a moment; then with hands clenched, and lips tightly set, he turned quickly from the window, and passed slowly down the lane, and out on to the road. Poor John! He felt that the light had departed from his life forever, and that now he must indeed pass the remainder of his days, unloved and alone! All the bitterness that had rankled in his breast because of the treachery of another he had loved and lost, came back to him with ten-fold force. But a short time before he had walked that same road, planning a bright, sweet future. In a moment the cup of sweetness that had not been his for many years, and which he had only sipped for a very little while, was dashed to the ground, and once more he had pressed to his lips the cup of bitterness, and was drinking to the dregs, its bitter draught.

Reaching a piece of swamp that lay between his house and the Grays', he sat down on a fallen tree. He had been sitting there for some time, wrapped in gloomy and resentful meditation, when the sound of approaching footsteps aroused him. By the light of the moon, he saw coming towards him, the man whom, for the moment, he hated above all other men: Bob Stewart! And in this lonely place, late on a November night, these two men, who loved one woman, met; and something happened, which does not always happen, when rival lovers meet. Stewart, recognizing Drummond seated on the fallen tree, went forward and saluted him with,

"Hello! John! what are you doin' here at this hour of the night?"

"I don't know as it's any of your business," angrily retorted John. "Surely a fellow can sit down by the roadside,